

Subject: Comments on Accident Report

To : Colonel Jack C. Ledford, Chief OSA

1. My specific comments relative to the findings and recommendations of the A-12 Accident Investigating Board are as follows:

A. Findings

a. Primary Cause - Agree, however, in all fairness one must realize that the decision as to whether the primary cause was due to pitot-static system blockage or pilot error is a matter of determining at which point the series of events could not reasonably be reversed. Precise and irrefutable determination of this is akin to resolving which came first, the chicken or the egg. A strong argument can be built for either view. All factors considered I tend to support the view of the board.

b. Contributing Causes

(1) Ref a - Disagree - I believe there was an honest misunderstanding between briefing personnel and pilot regarding meaning of comments regarding weather. Pilot felt and understood package would not function properly over or in clouds. He did not feel staff was concerned about instrument flying from aircraft safety standpoint once operating VOR installed which was the case here. He felt further that cloud cover problems were applicable only to selected portions of route where "package" would be operated. I am convinced there was no deliberate act of disobedience here, merely a semantics problem.

(2) Ref b - Agree

(3) Ref c - Agree

(4) Ref d - Agree

(5) Ref e - Agree with meaning of statement but not wording. There is a physically separate pitot-static system on the A-12 but the ram air intakes are co-located in such a manner that any object blocking one is apt, with a very high degree of probability, to block the other. As a result the practical result is "no alternate system."

(6) Ref f - Agree

c. Non-Contributory Findings

(1) Ref a - Agree without reservation.

(2) Ref b - Probably true.

(3) Ref c - Agree

(4) Ref d - Agree - nothing about this aircraft changes existing basic instrument flying techniques.

25X1A (5) Ref e - Disagree with wording - pilot followed check list but was careless in his actions. Some sort of stops are provided on the throttle quadrant of all jet aircraft to prevent the pilot from pulling throttles back into "cut off" position. A special motion, generally sideways or up is required to move throttles from idle to cut off. [] was careless in that he assumed throttles in cut off when a straight back pull failed to move them. Actually they had been left in idle by one of the maintenance personnel. The throttle on A-12 with J-75 engines requires a positive "upward" pull to lift them over a "cam" or "hump" on the throttle quadrant to move from cut off to idle or the reverse thereof. [] has no excuse.

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(6) Ref f - Agree

(7) Ref g - Agree

(8) Ref h - Agree

(9) Ref i - Agree

(10) Ref j - Agree

(11) Ref k - Agree

B. Recommendations

a. Recommendation for Primary Cause

(1) Ref a - Agree without reservation.

(2) Ref b - Agree

b. Recommendations for Contributing Causes

(1) Ref a - Agree. I have personally briefed all pilots on this subject and clearly outlined policy regarding all flying both in A-12 and F-101. They fully understand their job is to learn to fly straight and level and operate designated switches at prescribed times and places. No acrobatics or unusual maneuvers permitted.

(2) Ref b - All pilots are being thoroughly briefed on all phases of this accident with particular emphasis on this facet of ADC operations.

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(3) Ref c - Pros and cons of possible action will be discussed with all pilots. I have uncovered some misconceptions regarding afterburner nozzle operation. This is difficult area because it involves "Monday morning quarterbacking." [redacted] most frank and helpful in advising of his reasoning at time of flight as he remembers. I will use this as take off for group discussion.

(4) Ref d - Agree without reservation. This should not be subject to compromise even if it should prove to delay program.

(5) Ref e - Agree

(6) Ref f - Do not disagree. This problem has been discussed several times in the past year and the conclusion has consistently been "There is no type aircraft available other than another A-12 which offers a marked improvement over the F-101." Use of two A-12's doubles jeopardy in my opinion. Improvement in one or two specific areas such as turn radius, range, endurance, top speed, etc. would be improved dependant upon specific type aircraft selected but logistic and training problems quickly outweigh advantage particularly when one considers that A-12 will run off and leave all existing standard U. S. aircraft as soon as A-12 engine/duct match problem is solved.

G. Recommendations on Non-Contributory Findings

(1) Ref a - Agree

(2) Ref b - Agree with major qualifications. Serious study should be given to this item before a "go" decision is reached. The latitude between normal performance and "pitch trouble" is extremely wide in this aircraft. Satisfactory solutions to primary cause recommendations should eliminate a repeat of this accident cause. AR factors must be fully evaluated before any protuberances no matter how aerodynamically sound are placed on the aircraft where ground radar can see them. I put this item in "nice to have" category.

(3) Ref c - Agree

(4) Ref d - Agree, however believe it important to point out this was accomplished by pilot and both systems gave same false information.

(5) Ref e - Agree, action taken and will continue.

(6) Ref f - Agree

(7) Ref g - Agree

(8) Ref h - Agree

(9) Ref i - Agree, believe a simple power loss flag would suffice.

(10) Ref j - Agree, a simple red light tied to low pressure should suffice.



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